

Hood to Coast: Safety in mind as runners celebrate achievement

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“This is going to look very similar down here to every other year, with exception to following the COVID guidelines,” Floyd said. “We’re going show the entire state that you can hold an event and do it safely.”

Originally more than 1,250 teams were expected, but with travel restrictions for international teams, that was reduced to about 1,100, Floyd said. Cancellations will receive race deferrals until next year.

DJ Steph Floss and his team, Run with the Winners, came from Cleveland, Ohio, where they have worked as a running team for seven years. They learned about the race from two team members from Portland. Floss, near the finish line, said “his legs are crazy now.”

To train, the team’s Chris Thaxton said the team did hill workouts and “stacked their runs.”

Team member Kathryn Ferenz said the run was something she’s never experienced.

“We don’t get total darkness in Cleveland,” Ferenz said. “We’re not generally running on the roads at 3 a.m. We don’t generally see stars when we run. And we got to see stars. We have hills but not rolling hills like this.”

With a surge in COVID cases and new statewide outdoor mask mandates, safety protocols were at top of mind for runners and families.

Runners agreed. “I think they did a pretty good job of making us feel safe with mask requirements and all their safety protocols,” Kelly Trumbull, a team member of Running with the Bulls, based in Sacramento, California.

Max Dimm, of the Portland-based team Chafed and Confused, said there was uncertainty whether the event was going to happen. “The mask and the protocol was all appreciated, but it definitely added a different new element to things.”

Dimm said whenever not actually running, participants were expected to wear a mask to be courteous to the people around.

Along with masks, sanitizer and teams spread out over a longer duration on the course, Floyd said. Organizers hosted an on-site free vaccine location, open to race participants and the public.

Seaside Police Lieutenant Guy Knight said there had been no arrests or serious incidents connected to the race.

“It’s an interesting time in our world right now,” he said at the beach Saturday



Photos by R.J. Marx

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: The relay offered free vaccines to runners and to the public. Runners with Taking Care of Business, all co-workers, finished the relay in about 29 1/2 hours. Members of the Stumptown Women’s Run Club based in Portland. Girls Run Wild, from Salt Lake City, Utah. They’ve run many relays, but this was their first Hood to Coast.



afternoon. “Everybody’s trying to navigate it and weigh the risk and benefit. As you can see, most people are wearing their masks. They’re doing their best to social distance. All in all, I think it’s been successful so far.”

Brian Owen, CEO of the Seaside Chamber of Commerce said on Sunday he felt the event went “as well as it could have.”

With the extra space built into the finish line experience, teams, volunteers and residents distanced themselves and found a place to celebrate, connect and manage their own boundaries, Owen said.

“After the past 18 months of isolation or limited in-person human connection, it was nice to see people smiling, talking, joking and creating memories — memories that include our town, Seaside, a special place that since the late-1800s families from all over have traveled to experience the beautiful Oregon Coast.”



R.J. Marx

Along with construction of a new campus up the hill, Pacific Ridge Elementary School received major upgrades and renovations.

Construction: Additional weather protection

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to provide additional weather protection. Those plans are expected in September with work to be complete by mid-October.

“If we don’t find any large outstanding items for

repair, the major milestone coming up is to demobilize the contractor from the site,” Hardebeck said. “The goal is to have that occur by Sept. 15.”

Costs for the project through July, at \$130.1 million, are approach-

ing the forecast expenditures of \$131.6 million. In addition to the \$99.7 bond delivered by voters is supplanted by bond sales, interest, state grants, timber money, school sales and a \$9 million 20-year loan.

Park district: 75% of the staff vaccinated

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“Most of those were before the vaccine became available, but we have had four in the last couple of months that have tested positive,” Archibald said.

Youth programs reopened last week after closing due to a staff member who tested positive for the coronavirus. A positive test among staff brought a closure to preschool classrooms, with a tentative reopening in early September.

“Each time I feel like it happens it impacts our ability to focus on our mission and to serve our community, and that challenges us,” he said.

Archibald estimated about 75% of the staff is vaccinated.

A requirement could impact employees who have indicated they would rather

leave their jobs rather than get vaccinated, he said.

The decision comes as the park district struggles with staffing levels.

Like other local businesses, park district staff has been stretched thin this summer.

“We’re down three to five youth program positions and at least four aquatic positions for where we should be at right now with our current programming,” Archibald said. “I think there’s a lot of concern from the workforce about working with vulnerable populations.”

Board members were in agreement with the need for a vaccine requirement, with exemptions for medical or religious reasons.

Bodner advocated counseling and education to help retain staff.

“But, in the end, I think

it is best for the community that we’re serving,” she said. “We don’t have just one population that we’re serving, we have several vulnerable populations, and for that reason I wholeheartedly agree with the idea of requiring staff to be vaccinated.”

Bodner, board members Michael Hinton and Su Coddington and board president Katharine Parker voted for the vaccine requirement, pending a formal policy. Board member Erika Marshall was absent.

The policy could be finalized and voted on by the September board meeting.

“I appreciate that we made a controversial, hard decision today,” Parker said. “But I think it’s what’s best for our community to lead the way and keep everyone safe, particularly our vulnerable population.”

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