

Sports

Hunters walk Kansas fields

Since the annual fall pilgrimage began, upland game bird hunters have infiltrated Kansas fields on a steady basis, walking hundreds of combined miles in search of wily pheasant and bobwhite quail.

The trap shooting practice rounds are long gone, the shotguns finetuned, cleaned and oiled, and the dogs trained as man continues to test his skills against nature.

As the season passes, only good memories come to mind about seasons past.

Flipping through an old photo album the other day, I stumbled across old black-and-white Brownie photos from my first hunt as a boy in 1957.

My dad had packed the 1951 forest green Chevy short-bed pickup with our old red Coca-Cola cooler and our two English setters, Gentle and Dovie, along with plenty of shotgun shells and my first 20 gauge.

That particular year, we headed to Crescent, Iowa, which claimed to be the "Pheasant Capitol of the World." We met my Uncle Roy and one of his friends, and a couple of my dad's buddies who worked with him, the night before the season opened and drove three to four hours to Crescent.

We all followed each other up old U.S. 71 through Missouri, then over to U.S. 69 through Pattonsburg and up to a motel.

In the wee hours of that Saturday



The Jayhawker

By Jim Merriott

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morning, we fed the dogs their usual can of Strongheart dog food, watered them and headed out.

In Crescent, both restaurants were packed to the gills with orange hats — men smoking, drinking coffee and shoveling down greasy fried eggs and bacon.

As this sleepy-eyed boy drank his chocolate milk and finished off a bowl of oatmeal laced with brown sugar, I went over safety rules with my dad and the other hunters.

This particular hunt was a blocker drive hunt with hopes of taking as many birds as possible before the long trip back late Sunday night.

What I learned from that hunt was not all my dad's friends had the same hunting ethics my uncle and dad did.

The two hunters who worked with my dad at the time would shoot at anything that moved. If the pheasants were on the ground, they "Arkansawed" them, which upset my dad. It made no difference if the pheasant was a male or hen, they shot, and that really confused me.

By the time the hunt was over, the disrespectful hunters had killed four hens, which made my dad furious.

I overheard him say something to the effect that he no longer wanted to hunt with the two guys he worked with. He asked them to go their separate way because he was a sportsman, not a killer.

As I look back at my father's ethics, it is easy to think that he could have done the very same thing as his two working associates, but he didn't. A World War II veteran with 49 months in the Army, including 36 months overseas in the South Pacific theater and a Purple Heart and Bronze Star, he had seen enough killing.

Former St. Louis Cardinal Hall-of-Fame pitcher Dizzy Dean once said: "It ain't bragging if you done it."

As most veterans of World War II, my father never spoke much of what happened to him, except for showing me the scars he brought home. Only upon his tragic death in an automobile accident in 1995 did

I find his Purple Heart and Bronze Star, along with a picture of President Harry S. Truman pinning the medals on his chest. He was a humble, silent, strong man.

He was like thousands of American soldiers who survived the "The Big One," as he called it, the veterans who paid their dues serving our country to preserve our way of life.

What I remember most about that hunt, beside it being my first, was the fact that I was proud of my father for his code of conduct, for doing the right thing.

As my family looked over the faded pictures of our limit of pheasants and my very first bird, it was just a reminder that being an ethical hunter, being an accurate shot and playing by the rules is what it is all about.

It also reminded me of what our veterans fought and died for.

I salute each veteran for their service. I only wish that during the time I was in the Navy during the Vietnam War, that Americans had supported our service as much as they do today.

So before hitting the field, take a minute and think about your ethics and how you want to be remembered in years to come.

Remember, hunting is a sport, and sportsmanship and safety always come first.

Then take a little time to thank a veteran who made it possible for you to hit the field.

Good luck and happy hunting.



OBERLIN'S CODY HAAS (44) watched a basket go through the net last Tuesday at the annual intrasquad Food Scrimmage. Haas is the only senior on this year's team.

— Herald staff photo by Jim Merriott

Devils demonstrate new style at game

Last Tuesday, the Decatur Community High boys basketball team displayed a new brand of basketball under new head coach Greg Olson at the annual Food Scrimmage.

The team was split up evenly, with Olson coaching one squad and new assistant coach Tim Thornton the other.

The Red Devils demonstrated their enthusiasm with a peppy pregame warm-up then focused their attention on developing basic fundamentals.

"I thought the game went pretty well," said Coach Thornton. "I was pleased that the positive attitudes we've been seeing in practice carried over to the game."

"Defensively, we still need some work. I thought overall we played as a team and tried to involve everyone

as much as possible.

"The main thing this week is that we get the boys prepared to play ball," Coach Thornton said, "and that they put everything they've got into winning the game. If we play hard and we play together, everything else will work itself out."

Each squad worked on the offense and defense installed by the new coaches.

Oberlin will field a young team, predominately juniors and sophomores, as Cody Haas at post is the only returning senior.

Oberlin is looking to improve on a 1-19 season from a year ago.

The Red Devils open up their season against the Oakley Plainsmen on Friday in Oakley, starting after the girls game about 8 p.m.

Girls show off skills

The Decatur Community High Lady Red Devils showed off their fundamental skills for the fans at the annual Food Scrimmage last Tuesday.

The team was divided into two squads, with Coach Terry Ream and his new assistant, Lindsay Fortin, each coaching one.

"I thought the Food Scrimmage was OK, nothing spectacular," said Ream. "We have a lot of stuff to add before we are ready to play and are still deciding on who to start, who to play and how to play."

"Oakley has a real tough team, defending state champions, and will be a good test for us to see where we are standing at this point of year," Coach Ream said. "We may have to do a lot of tinkering early in the year, while we get some experience for our younger ladies and to make adjustments on how to play. We should have no problem improving during the entire year, as we have quite a few good athlete."

The Lady Red Devils travel to Oakley for their first game at 6:30 p.m. Friday.

Seventh graders win against Buffs

The Decatur Community High seventh-grade boys basketball squad continued their winning efforts last Monday, defeating the Rawlins County Buffaloes 60-38 and extending their winning streak to six games.

The young Red Devils were led by point guard Zach May, who pumped in 18 points, followed by Tyler Bruggeman and Kade Brown with 13 points each.

Oberlin continued to distribute the ball around the floor, finding the open man and allowing every player on the team an opportunity to score.

Guard Brady Fortin came off the bench again sparking the Red Devils with eight points, Ryan May finished with six points, and Channing Farr contributed

two points.

"What a wonderful team effort," said Coach Tim Breth. "We shared the ball really well and handled Atwood's press with ease which allowed easy shots on our end of the court."

The Red Devils moved their season record to 6-0 and will travel to Goodland to tackle the Grant Junior High Mustangs Thursday starting at 4:30 p.m.

Oberlin will then prepare for the Northwest Kansas League tournament held in Oberlin on Dec. 10. The second game of the tournament will be held Dec. 13 in Atwood. The times will be announced later.

Scoring	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Final
Atwood	8	9	10	11	38
Oberlin	16	20	8	16	51

Eighth graders lose to Atwood

The Decatur Community Junior High eighth-grade boys basketball team continued to struggle last Monday, losing to Rawlins County 51-33 and dropping their record to 1-5 for the season.

The young Red Devils played Atwood evenly in the first period tying the score 8-8.

In the second quarter, the young Buffaloes opened up a six-point lead even though the Red Devils played strong defense. Atwood led 20-14 at halftime.

Brent Juenemann kept the Red Devils in the game, leading Oberlin with 10 points.

Saeger Grafel added nine points with his outside shooting; Garrett Berry found the net under the basket to his liking, adding eight points; Shane McEvoy hit two baskets for four points; and Tyler Shields added an additional two points.

"The first half, we played good defense and were only down by six points," said Coach Tim Breth. "I felt good about what we were doing and our chances. The second half Atwood really hurt us on the offensive boards."

The young Red Devils will travel to Goodland Thursday to tackle the Grant Mustangs starting around 5:30 p.m. or shortly after the seventh-grade game.

Oberlin will then prepare for the Northwest League tournament on Dec. 10.

The location of the game will be decided by who wins the Northwest Kansas League championship which will be determined after Thursday's games.

The second game of the tournament will be held at Grant Middle School in Goodland on Thursday, Dec. 23. The time will be announced later.

Scoring	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Final
Atwood	8	12	12	19	51
Oberlin	8	6	7	12	33

Rexford junior named all-league

Rexford junior Kelton Jones heads the list of Golden Plains Bulldogs who received All-League honors from the Western Kansas Liberty League during the fall sports season.

Jones was named to the first team as a defensive lineman and the

second team as a center. This was his third consecutive year to take All-League honors.

Other Bulldogs football players who received honors were senior Danny Rogers, second team running back, second team defensive back and second team return specialist;

junior Tate Bruggeman, honorable mention at tight end/receiver; and senior Andrew Broeckelman, honorable mention at defensive back. It was the second year for all three.

On the girls' side, senior Brittany Ritter received honorable mention for the first time in volleyball.

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Oberlin Herald Ad Manager Dave Bergling (left) congratulates Todd Ketterl, this year's Pigskin Pick-em grand prize winner.