



RED DEVIL JUNIOR CHRIS LARSON lined up a putt at the Goodland Invitational Golf Tournament at Sugar Hills

Golf Club last Tuesday. Oberlin took 10th place.
— Herald photo by Dick Ahlberg

Oberlin golfers take 10th at meet

The Decatur Community High school golf team finished 10th at the Goodland Invitational Golf Tournament at Sugar Hills Golf Club last Tuesday.

The Red Devils were led by juniors Jordan Tally and Nathan Simonsson who both broke the century mark on the 18 holes.

Talley shot 47-50 for a 97 while

Simonsson was hot on his heels shooting 50-48 for a 98.

Freshmen Jacob Larue turned in a nice performance in his varsity debut posting a 57-52 for 109.

Junior Chris Larson shot 56-58 for 114.

The Hays High junior varsity won the tournament with a team score of 328, followed by Ulysses, 347;

Colby, 349; Goodland, 351; Scott City, 368; Hoxie, 368; Atwood, 371; Quinter, 381; Oakley, 406; Oberlin, 418; Thomas More Prep of Hays junior varsity, 432; and Norton junior varsity, 485.

"This was our first meet of the year," said Coach Dick Ahlberg. "Some of the teams played last week. We will work hard and im-

prove. We get pretty busy now with three meets in a week's time."

The Oberlin Invitational, which was scheduled for Saturday April 12, has been moved to this Saturday at the Country Club.

On Tuesday, Oberlin was to play in McCook and on Friday the Red Devils will attend the Hill City Invitational.

Hunters should worry about water woes

If hunters and landowners in northwest Kansas don't know it, there is trouble brewing in eastern Colorado. It deals with landowner lockouts and it's all about water.

If you ask a pheasant hunter, it's about the birds they hunt.

In a protest against the Colorado Division of Wildlife's participation in a lawsuit that pits surface water rights against groundwater, about 100 farmers in the eastern plain are boycotting this year's pheasant season.

The center of the protest is in Yuma County between U.S. 34 and U.S. 36. Farmers and ranchers there have pledged 340,000 acres to the boycott.

Along with Yuma County, land owners in Kit Carson, Phillips and Washington counties have joined the protest.

This has caused the wildlife managers west of us to worry that the problem could spread to other hunting states such as Kansas, Nebraska, the Dakotas and Iowa.

Farmers could refuse to participate in the popular Walk-In hunting program for upland game. The program pays the owners to open their private land for public hunting.

It may be that farmers will only allow friends and family to hunt birds, which belong to everybody, as wildlife is public property.



The Jayhawker

By Jim Merriott

jtmerrriott@nwkans.com

The heart of the problem is the continuing struggle between those with rights to surface water in the northern Republican River Basin and farmers, who drilled wells for irrigating crops.

One major concern is the increasing demand for biofuels and the increase in corn production, a large water-consumption plant.

Debate is now swirling about how much water is needed to support corn and whether it's going to continue to go up.

The dispute involves a decision by the division to participate in the lawsuit filed by Pioneer and Laird Ditch Co. to prevent landowners from using wells within a stipulated distance from Chief Creek, a tributary that meets the river in Wray.

The division uses Chief Creek water to feed its Wray hatchery.

For years, landowners have nurtured habitat to protect and feed

wild game not only in Colorado, but across America.

Don Brown, a spokesman for the Yuma County group said, "We feel betrayed. For years we've fed birds, fed deer, planted the trees and grasses Colorado Division of Wildlife wanted. Now they file this action, and, if they win, they will bankrupt Yuma County."

Landowners feel that if the suit passes, it would shut down wells used to irrigate about 120,000 acres with a cost of about \$320 million.

It is also a concern, landowners said, that grain watered by the wells provides the main food source for game, because hunting is consider best on irrigated land.

Farm owners are asking the state to drop the suit.

However, the division seems determined to protect its ability to maintain the Chief Creek Hatchery, which provides about 40 percent

of the warm water fish for state stocking.

"Our concern is that we need to resolve the Wray hatchery problem, where flows have been declining," said Tom Remington, division director.

Court rulings have determined that wells deplete groundwater, thus diminishing stream flows.

"I understand how our being involved in litigation that could have an impact on the agricultural economy could cause anxiety. I see why they'd be upset," Remington said.

Remington is responsible for the Colorado Walk-In Program, which started in 2001.

"A lockout is going to have winners and losers; a lawsuit will have winners and losers," he said. "I'm looking for a solution that doesn't have any losers in a big way."

Remington would like to be able to negotiate an agreement to use a water well owned by the town of Wray for the hatchery.

This will all come to a head at the June hearing by the Colorado Groundwater Commission in Wray.

These issues trickle to Kansas and Nebraska. If the situation in Wray is not resolved, it may spread causing even more difficulty for hunters to find a place to hunt.

Time to go looking for walleye lunkers

By JIM MERRIOTT

jtmerrriott@nwkans.com

It doesn't take a genius to figure out that it is spring. The trees are budding and the orange-breasted robins are searching for juicy worms.

As the winter turns into spring, the wheat has begun to sprout into lush green pastures.

With spring fever in the air, I met a retired railroad buddy of mine at Sutherland Reservoir just west of North Platte, in search of pre-spawn walleye.

Armed with plenty of warm clothing and gear, my friend Willie Nelson (not the country singer), and I baited our hooks.

Our goal, to hunt down and catch this pallet pleaser before another cold front pushed its way through the Midwest.

As the waves chopped white caps close to three-foot high, I looked at Willie.

"It looks pretty rough out there, do you think it's safe?" I said.

"If you are going to find the lunkers, you got to pay the price," he said.

Now, I am no fool when it comes to the "Walleye Chop." For years, I have fought the waters in search great fish.

With water pouring in over the sides of the boat, we bounced our way across the three-mile lake to the rip-rap along the dam.

As Nelson tossed out a drag net to slow us down, we began the wobbling search for egg filled females which are ready to drop their spawn.

Rigged with worm-harnesses and four-inch shiners we fought Mother Nature.

Back and forth we trolled.

After 30 minutes or so of watching my rod tip bounce like a ping pong ball, the tip gradually began to bend, as if it were being dragged through warm syrup.

As I reached for the rod, Willie said, "Easy does it, easy....easy, NOW."

I set the hook. Willie handled the trolling motor. And I reeled it in. As the waves pushed us close to the rocks along the dam, Willie reached for the net.

As I reeled in the marble-eyed beauty, a smile came across Willie's face.

"I told you they were hitting," he said. "I figure the females are gorging themselves before they lay

their eggs."

After about three more hours of fishing and fighting the wind, we each had caught our limit of four each, well above the 15-inch limit.

In fact, two of them weighed in around five-pounds.

Two large females, the rest males. We released the females and set the males aside for the frying pan.

After cleaning them, Willie's wife fried up some potatoes and onions, then added a side of stewed-tomatoes, hot-buttered biscuits with honey and a large glass of iced-tea. A meal fit for a king.

Early Thursday, with the trolling motor batteries freshly charged, we hit the waters again. The fishing had slowed and we only found pockets with the fish finder.

Vertical jigging over suspended schools in 20 feet of water produced

a few small fish.

It was almost necessary to drop the line and bait directly in front of their noses to make them hit.

We caught a baker's dozen of scrubs, all under the limit. Nothing to take home, but we did catch fish.

I helped Willie clean his boat before we parted ways Thursday evening.

"I'll give you a call the next time I head out," he said.

As we went our ways, all I could do was smile. It had been a great two-day trip, which wet my appetite for the up coming season.

Our sister state to the north provides strong waters. Sutherland Reservoir is heating up, Lake Malone, just south of North Platte, and Red Willow Reservoir, just outside of McCook, will be next.

Here are some tips for catching fish

By JIM MERRIOTT

jtmerrriott@nwkans.com

Over the years, I've gone through hundreds of road and reels and thousands of yards of monofilament line in search of tasty fillets.

Some trips have been great and others a challenge.

I've learned that there are good days and bad days, and sometimes it's a flip of a coin to see what happens.

So what should fishermen do when the feisty little critters decide not to bite.

Here are a few tips that will help improve the odds in your favor.

1. If the fish aren't biting, cover more ground.

2. Have I used more than one pattern of bait? i.e. flutter jig and minnow, Fuzz Grubs and minnow, hammered-chrome spoon, firetail spoon, lead-headed jig with at least a 4-inch rubber worm, Gitzit, Lindy Little Joe yellow grub, Lindy rig with minnow or worm, spinner with a minnow, bottom bouncer or crankbaits?

3. What areas are still available? Rocky ledges? Rip-rap along the dam?

4. Have I only fished the points? 5. Did I fish the gravel? Under-

water humps?

6. What did I overlook?

7. If they are not shallow or deep, then they must be in between.

8. Did I fish the fingers of the lake?

9. What time of day is it? Did a cold front come in? Was the barometer steady or changing?

10. What was the water temperature?

Follow these tips and keep your line in the water. The more you keep your lines wet, the better your chances are of catching the big ones. Good luck and keep those lines tight.

Sports

Fans pack stands at speedway races

Area auto racing fans got their money's worth Sunday at the Decatur County Speedway in Oberlin.

Blood, Sweat and Tears racing promoter Joe Bellm brought his show to town packing the fair-ground stands for the first time in a long time.

Bellm's team put on a show that had the fans standing with an ovation at the final presentation of first-place awards in the winner's circle.

Oberlin's hometown racing legend, David Murray, also put on quite a show, letting racers from Lamar, Colo. to Kansas City know that he is the man to beat again this year.

Murray blazed around the track as if he owned it, winning the competition by 10 seconds or more ahead of 24 other drivers in the main event.

Decatur Community High senior, Royal Fisher won the mini-truck division, leaving his opposing drivers eating dust during the warm breezy afternoon. Fisher crossed the checkered flag against three other mini-truck drivers in the main event.

Other winners were sports modified, Ryan Gaylord, Golden, Colo.; stocks, Travis Sherfick, WaKeeney; hobbies, Todd Pankonin, Benkelman, Neb.; and classic modifieds, Max Pullman, Trenton, Neb.

"We are happy to have such a great turnout," said Bellm. "We want to be able to put on the best shows that the Oberlin community has ever seen. This is something we can build on, with over 70 entries, I wouldn't be surprised to see over 100 by the next race scheduled on Saturday, June 7."

Sprint series gains extra national sponsors

While races were being held in Oberlin, the United Rebel Sprint Series also has begun its 25 shows across the region.

As the series continues to grow in popularity; so do the number of sponsors including Weld Racing Wheels out of Kansas City, Hoosier Racing Tires, and Coors Light.

Oberlin promoter Rick Salem, has agreed to work with Broomfield, Colo., promoter Joe Bellm of Blood, Sweat and Tears Modifieds to bring dirt track racing to Oberlin.

Salem brings his brand of racing to Oberlin's Decatur County Speedway on Saturday, June 7. The pits will open around 3 p.m. with

racing to follow.

On Sunday, Aug. 24, Bellm and his crew will again come to Oberlin with Salem's group to produce the final show of the season. Gates will also open in the late afternoon with racing to follow.

"I am looking forward to coming back to Oberlin this season," said Salem. "We plan on putting together a terrific show, so I hope everybody comes out."

For information on the Rebel series racing schedules go to www.unitedrebelsprintseries.com or call Salem at 475-7010 or by e-mail at rksalem@eaglecom.net.

Rain, snow, wind cause postponement of events

Wind, rain and snow combined last week to cause the cancellation of track meets and gold tournaments in northwest Kansas.

Both the Decatur Community High track and golf teams are looking at rescheduled activities.

On Friday, activities director and track coach Joe Dreher was busy trying to find holes into the Red Devil's busy schedule.

"At this time, I am not sure about our cancelled track meet in Atwood," he said.

Rawlins County High School was still trying to decide whether to reschedule or just drop it because of scheduling conflicts, he said.

The Oberlin Golf Invitational, which was scheduled for Saturday, has been moved back a week. It will begin at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday. The public is invited.

The golf team will have a busy week, as they were to play in

McCook on Tuesday against the Bisons and other Nebraska teams. Then on Friday, the team has a 3 p.m. tee time in Hill City.

The track team's next meet is at 5:30 p.m. Friday, in Oakley.

Then on Tuesday, the Red Devils will have a 3 p.m. start at a meet in St. Francis.

On Tuesday, the golf team will have a 3 p.m. meet in Hoxie.

The junior high track team will also be busy this week. On Tuesday, it was to be in St. Francis. Then on Thursday the team will have a 3 p.m. meet in Quinter with the Bulldogs, the Grant Mustangs of Goodland and the Hoxie Indians.

On Monday, the track freshmen and sophomores have a meet 3 p.m. in Atwood.

On Thursday, April 24, the junior high track team will be in Hoxie for a meet.

"It is just that time of year," said Dreher.



OBERLIN COUNTRY CLUB

Invites you to a
Free day of Golf!!

WHEN: Saturday, April 26, 2008 10 a.m.
WHERE: Oberlin Country Club

Carts available for a small rental fee
Also, to settle your hunger, buy a hamburger or hot dog and to quench your thirst, beverages will be available.

**FOLLOWING THE FREE DAY
JOIN US FOR A PANCAKE SUPPER!!**

WHEN: Saturday, April 26, 2008 6 p.m.
WHERE: Oberlin American Legion

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