

H.S. BASEBALL

Bees finish 4-0 with dramatic win

■ Bonneville finished an unbeaten run at their Arizona tourney thanks to a strange finish.

POST REGISTER

At Surprise, Ariz., the Bonneville High School baseball team closed its four-day trip to the Coach Bob National Invitational in Arizona still unde-

feated with a 4-3, nine-inning victory against Arizona's Coconino High School.

But the win was anything but conventional. Tied at 2-2 entering the top of the seventh, Coconino scored the go-ahead run on a double over center fielder Jalen Fuhriman's head and looked to press the issue and add an insurance run



on the hit. Bonneville cut off Fuhriman's throw and junior shortstop Lincoln Clayton eventually tagged out a Coconino runner in a rundown between third base and home plate. Coconino tried to sneak another runner into third base in the chaos with no one covering the bag. But Clayton sprinted back to the base, dove

and tagged the runner out for the inning-ending double play.

"Unbelievable. I've never seen anything like it in my life," Bonneville coach Joldy Watts said. "It's the most interesting double play I've ever seen."

Then, with two outs in the bottom of the ninth, Coconino

■ Bonneville will host rival Hillcrest on Tuesday afternoon
BEES, Continued on Page B2

COMPETITIVE SHOOTING



Eagle Rock Junior High seventh-grader Ethan Bauer competes at a USA Shooting national qualifier in January in Twin Falls.

Scott Bauer courtesy photo

Gun Control

Eagle Rock seventh-grader is one straight shooter

■ Ethan Bauer, a 13-year-old from Idaho Falls, will represent Idaho at the Junior Olympics.

By MARLOWE HEREFORD
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Ethan Bauer's future in competitive shooting was evident as a child when he went outside to shoot an air soft gun.

Now a seventh-grader at Eagle Rock Junior High School, Bauer will represent Idaho at the Junior Olympics in air rifle and air pistol from Tuesday to Saturday and April 14 to 20 in Colorado Springs, Colo. In June, he will compete at the USA Shooting Rifle and Pistol National Championships in Fort Benning, Ga.

Bauer took up competitive shooting just two years ago. Since then, the 13-year-old has become the leading shooter under coach

Randy Shikashio at the Cedar Hills Junior 4-H Gun Club in Blackfoot, which is always open to new members. He practices three times a week for two to three hours and enters local competitions year round, more so in the summer.

Bauer competed at last summer's national championships in Anniston, Ala., and said he is familiar with the big-stage atmosphere. That experience also led him set new goals for this year.

"It was pretty impressive," Bauer said. "At the Junior Olympics, I want to at least shoot above my high score. In practice, my scores tend to be higher than competition."

Bauer was the first in his family to take up the sport. His sister, Jenna, who is two years younger, tried competitive shooting for a while before deciding to take up other activities instead.

Bauer's mother, Karen, said his journey so far has been eye-opening for the family.

"He developed a love for it," Karen Bauer said. "It's been fantastic to watch. You go to these competitions and see these kids just dedicated to the sport. To be successful at this sport, you literally have to stand still and do nothing except pull a trigger."

This is Bauer's final season competing at the J3 classification of USA Shooting before moving up to J2. The qualifying score for the Junior Olympics is 560. Karen Bauer said her son has been shooting consistently in the 560s over the past several months.

Bauer described competitive shooting as a "very mental game." Overthinking can lead to getting a score lower than a shooter desires.

"To prepare myself when I'm shooting, I can't think of how the score will be or count

■ Bauer aims to earn a shooting scholarship, preferably from the Air Force Academy

SHOOTER, Continued on Page B2

NCAA MEN'S BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

No. 9 reaches Final Four

■ Wichita State broke its game open and cruised past Ohio St. and into Atlanta.

By GREG BEACHAM
AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES — Cleanthony Early kept stealing glances down at the hat in his hands while he waited for his turn to climb the stepladder, scissors in hand. The Wichita State forward seemed stunned at the words embroidered on his brand new ballcap: "Final Four Atlanta."

"It's crazy. I still can't believe we're here," Early said. "This really happened."

Believe it. Wichita State is going to Atlanta, and these Shockers are no longer a surprise after the way the tenacious ninth seeds held off mighty Ohio State in the West Regional final.

Malcolm Armstead scored 14 points, Fred Van Vleet bounced in a big basket with one minute left, and Wichita State earned its first trip to the Final Four since 1965 with a 70-66 victory over the Buckeyes on Saturday.

Van Vleet scored 12 points as the Shockers (30-8) followed up last week's win over top-ranked Gonzaga with a nail-biting victory over the second-seeded Buckeyes (29-8), whose 11-game winning streak ended one short of their second straight Final Four.

Wichita State's 20-point lead in the second half dwindled to three in the final minutes, but several Shockers stepped up with big plays to stop the surge, heeding coach Gregg Marshall's halftime command to "play angry."

Wichita State is just the fifth team seeded ninth or higher to reach the Final Four since seeding began in 1979, but the second in three years following 11th-seeded VCU's improbable run in 2011. The Shockers' celebration was wild, if a bit disbelieving, in front of several thousand roar-

ing fans. "Last year we were watching all this on television," said Early, who scored 12 points despite spraining his ankle in the second half. "Now I'm looking at a hat that says 'Final Four Atlanta' with my team on it. ... It feels good."



INSIDE
■ Syracuse stomps Marquette / B2



Jae C. Hong / Associated Press

Wichita State guard Fred Van Vleet celebrates his team's 70-66 win over Ohio State in the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament's West Regional final Saturday in Los Angeles.

Commentary

Cheering all the way to the ER

Enough with the competitions, the scorekeeping and the acrobatics.

Enough with the tumbling runs, pyramid building and testing just how high we can throw a fellow human being.

Because no matter how much you practice your basket toss and cradle catch, competitive cheerleading is tedious, it's wrong, and most of all, it's dangerous.

The purpose of cheerleaders is to lead cheers, and stir the home fans into a partisan frenzy.

Somewhere along the line, however, we traded those meg-a-phones for bro-ken-bones.

In 2011, the Consumer Product Safety Commission reported 36,925 cheerleaders went to the hospital as a result of cheering.

The same report showed more than 65 percent of catastrophic injuries to high school girls were cheerleading-related.

In fairness, those catastrophic injuries are trending downward, but that 65 should be zero.

A "catastrophic injury" is one that leaves the injured permanently disabled for life.

We're talking about things like skull and spinal fractures. Things like organ damage and paralysis.

The worst cheerleaders should suffer in the line of duty is a mild ankle sprain, or the temporary discomfort of laughing milk out of their nose.

Throwing a student 15 feet in the air without a safety mat and helmet is reckless, bordering on criminal.

The only high school activity that is more dangerous is football, and they are covered head to knee in safety equipment.

Cheerleaders? Their only protection is the hope no one on the ground makes a mistake.

Or sneezes. Or has a gnat fly into their open mouth.

If you want to do team gymnastics, do team gymnastics.

If you want to jump out of an airplane, jump out of an airplane.

But you can't do these things in sanctioned competition as a representative of your high school. They wouldn't allow it.

The Occupational Health and Safety Administration wouldn't allow it either, and neither should the Idaho High School Activities Association.

If the IHSAA sanctioned cheerleading as a sport, it would have to regulate it as a sport. As it is, administrators and parents are the only line of defense.

As it stands, we have three options:

A) Pay the IHSAA to sanction and fund the sport, and ratchet down the danger with safety gear and regulations, OR

B) Do nothing, and practice your palm-over-the-mouth "oh my goodness" face for the inevitable tragedy, OR

C) Encourage our cheerleaders to lead cheers, our basketball players to play basketball, and our bus drivers to drive busses.

We like cheerleaders because they make us feel good. They are coached to smile, chant and kick.

To laugh, play and shake their pom-poms.

Competitive cheerleading hijacks this wholesome tradition, and puts healthy, happy kids in danger as part-time acrobats.

When cheerleaders cheer for judges instead of fans, they cease to be cheerleaders altogether.

And when they wake up in the intensive care ward with one tube up their nose and another down their throat, they cease to be high school students as well.

With no sanctioning of competitive cheerleading in Idaho, there is no safety net for these amateur circus performers.

And there should be no competitive cheerleading.



PAUL LAMBERT

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