



File photo by Adam Lapierre

SPECTATORS have a front-row seat of the action from the Hood River Event Site, where activities for the annual event are based.

Kiteboarding 4 Cancer is this weekend

Endurance race, fundraising highlights nation's largest amateur kiting event

By **LINDSAY MCCLURE**
For the News

Once every summer, the disorganized jumble of kiteboarders on the Columbia River transforms into an orchestrated mob of brilliant colors, rallying around the river in support of young cancer survivors.

"It's almost as enjoyable to sit on the beach and watch the chaos, the colors, the excitement, enjoy the music, and experience the energy the event provides to the community as participating," says Steve Fisher, cancer survivor and Kiteboarding 4 Cancer participant.

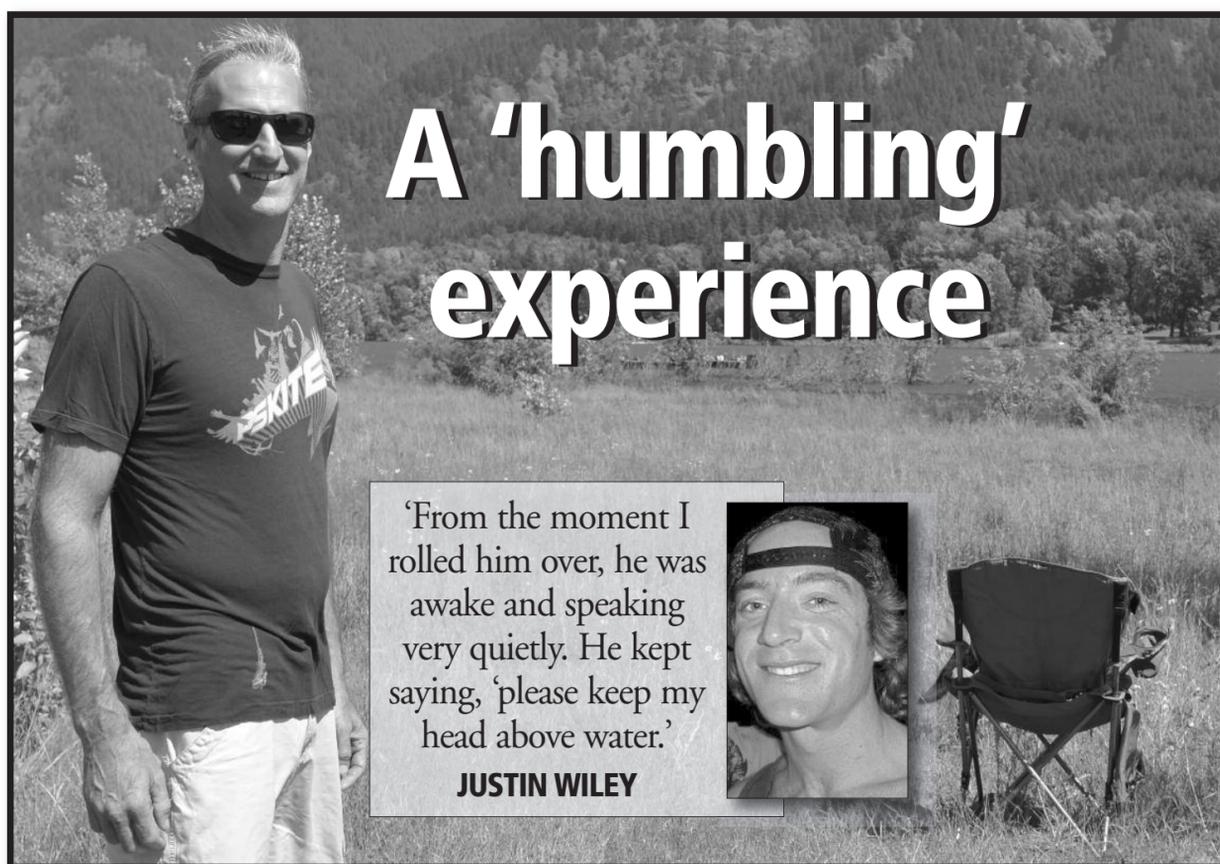
The annual event returns to Hood River this weekend, July 12-14 at the Event Site, and the buzz surrounding the event is understandable, as endurance racers spend six full hours on the river, battling unpredictable weather and nearly 200 other contestants to complete as many laps as possible around a large course roughly between the Sandbar and Wells Island.

Tonia Farman, KB4C founder, says the kite derby is designed to replicate the inescapable struggle that cancer patients live with day-in and day-out of their lives.

For many, KB4C — North America's largest amateur kiteboarding event — sets itself apart from other events because of the importance of the cause it represents. Take Olivia Halfen, for example. The event volunteer coordinator is also a cancer survivor.

"Every time I go to the event I look out and see how many people are suited up and ready to spend six hours on the water and I think how everyone is doing it to support people just like me," she said.

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A 'humbling' experience

'From the moment I rolled him over, he was awake and speaking very quietly. He kept saying, 'please keep my head above water.'

JUSTIN WILEY

Photo by Adam Lapierre

SORE BUT STANDING, Seattle resident and Gorge frequenter Tom Dawson was out of the hospital and mobile three days after a kiteboarding crash at the Hood River sandbar that would have ended much worse if fellow kiteboarders and onlookers didn't come to his immediate rescue.

Bystanders come to man's rescue in the nick of time

By **ADAM LAPIERRE**
News staff writer

Imagine lying face down in the river, fully conscious but unable to move, aware of people around you but unsure if they'll be able to flip you over before the last breath burning in your lungs expires and you drown.

"I was awake; I just couldn't move," said Tom Dawson, who faced that fearful situation Wednesday evening while kiteboarding at the west end of the Hood River sandbar. The 49-year-old field engineer and Seattle resident was enjoying some of last week's warm, windy conditions when a small slipup nearly cost him his life.

"I had just finished a trick and was riding away on the toeside of my board. I knew it was shallow, but not that shallow. My board slipped out and I fell forward, head-first into the water."

The impact on Dawson's forehead didn't leave so much as a scratch or a bruise, but it was enough to cause temporary paralysis from head to toe. Still attached to his kite, he lay helpless and face down in the water, hop-

ing that someone who saw the crash, either from the deck of the nearby Sandbar Café or one of the many kiteboarders in the area, would come to his aid in time. As his body began convulsing from lack of oxygen, Hood River native Justin Wiley was the first to reach him.

"I put my kite down in the water, ditched my board and put my left arm behind his neck and gently flipped him over," Wiley said Monday from his job at 2nd Wind Sports. "From the moment I rolled him over, he was awake and speaking very quietly. He kept saying, 'Please keep my head above water.' I knew I needed to be careful with his neck, so I just held him carefully in that position until other people came over to help."

Second to Dawson's aid was local kiteboarding instructor Blaine Baker, who jumped over the railing of the Sandbar Café and swam to help. A few others arrived moments later to help clear the water of kites, lines and boards and stabilize Dawson until paramedics arrived.

"It's very humbling," Dawson said. "I'm

usually the one who is helping others, and the way everyone came to my side like they did is very humbling."

After being taken to Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital, he was transferred to Legacy Emanuel in Portland, where he quickly regained feeling and the use of his limbs. He was released Friday and spent much of Saturday stiff and slow, but able to hang out by the river and watch his friends kiteboard.

For Wiley and others who helped with the rescue, the news of his recovery was a great relief in what could have been a tragic situation.

"I haven't talked to him since, but am stoked to hear he is doing so well," Wiley said. "I just feel fortunate to have been there at the right time and to have been able to do what I know anyone else would have done in that same situation."

While driving back home to Seattle after what turned out to be a very long week, Dawson offered the sincere words, "From everyone who helped me in the water, to the paramedics and the staff in Hood River and Portland, I am grateful. Thank you."

Oiler boys chase shot at playoffs

By **MIKE WEBER**
For the News

Hood River's Carson Oil-sponsored Oilers baseball team started its home Firecracker Tournament with a bang Friday in the form of a 9-2 win over David Douglas. Following the impressive opening victory, however, the Oilers were unable to build additional momentum in the seven-team, July 5-7 contest at Hood River Valley High School's Traner Field.

Despite dropping four of five games on the weekend, Oiler coaches Adam Howell and Don Lariza have reasons to be optimistic. All of them were non-league, so the outcomes have no effect on the Oregon Junior State Baseball Association Division 1 standings. With a 5-4 record, the Oilers remain a top contender among the 11 Portland-area squads vying for the league's three summer league playoff spots.

"It was nice to start the tournament with a win," said Howell, the Oilers' fourth-year coach. "Whenever you host an event like this, obviously you hope to win it. After playing five games in three days, we were just mentally fatigued and we were unable to pull through and get a win Sunday."

The Oilers can take a big step toward qualifying for the postseason with five final regular season games, all at home, including two this week (6 p.m. Tuesday vs. Horizon Christian of Tualatin and 6 p.m. Thursday vs. Wilson).

"Our goal is to reach the playoffs so that we can continue developing our players by competing in baseball until the end of summer," said Howell. "Finishing in the top three of league would certainly represent a successful summer program."

The Oilers displayed a potent offense versus David Douglas while out-hitting their opponent 12-3 in a come-from-behind win in the 9 a.m. contest. Trailing 2-0, the Oilers erupted for five runs in the third inning, highlighted by Ryan Ward's go-ahead, two-run single to make it 3-2.

The Oilers extended it to 5-2 and then tacked on three in the fourth and one in the fifth for the final 9-2 margin. Starting pitcher Kam Walker (eight strikeouts, walk) threw the first five innings on the mound and he combined with re-

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SPORTS BRIEFS

Youth tennis camps have room

July tennis camps for youth, middle and high school players have openings this year. The camps will be held in White Salmon due to the Hood River courts being remodeled all summer. Camps are as follows:

Middle and high school camp: July 15-18, the first three days will run from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and will focus on developing tennis skills and match play strategy. The final day will be a mini tournament from 10 a.m. to about 1 p.m. Cost is \$68 and instructors are Leslie Kerr, Kenzie Kerr, Justine Ziegler and additional as needed.

Youth camp: July 22-25, will run from 10 a.m. to noon each day and will focus on developing tennis skills and practicing them in game format. Cost is \$54 and instructors Kenzie Kerr, Leslie Kerr and additional as needed.

Sign up for all camps through Hood River Community Education at www.hoodriver.k12.or.us/coe. Call Kenzie Kerr at 541-399-2515 for more information.

Two Hawks named to hoops all-state team

Horizon Christian School's Matt Totaro and Jake Wells were selected to the 2013 basketball all-state teams, which were announced last week. The teams were selected by Class 1A coaches in conjunction with the annual summer all-star series held late last month in Central Oregon. Totaro, a 6-foot-5 junior, was a first-team pick, and Wells, a 6-7 senior, was selected to the second team. Totaro and Wells led Horizon to a runner-up finish at the 1A state tournament.

Timbers offer bilingual soccer clinic Aug. 8

The Portland Timbers soccer program is hosting a bilingual soccer clinic for Hood River-area players Aug. 8, from 3:30-5 p.m. at Hood River Middle School. The free clinic will be a unique opportunity for young players to work with some of the state's top coaches through the Somos Timbers youth program. Pre-registration is required and a cap of 125 players has been set. To register or for more information, contact Pepi Rivera at 541-399-3362 or the Somos Timbers at 503-553-5425.

All-Stars are off to state

Hood River's 9/10 girls win district tournament to advance to next level

By **ADAM LAPIERRE**
News staff writer

Hood River Little League's four All-Star teams returned from Bend after several days of sunny summer ball in Central Oregon during the annual District 5 tournament. Made up of top players selected by coaches from teams in Parkdale, Odell, Hood River, White Salmon and Trout Lake, the teams competed in double-elimination brackets against squads from a dozen other leagues in the region for a shot at the state tournament held next week in Scappoose.

The only team to win its bracket and represent Hood River at the next level was the 9/10 girls, who went undefeated in four rounds, including a 15-4 rout of Crook County in the finals to claim top honors and extend the season for another couple weeks.

"Last year we went down, won one game and lost the next two, so our expectations weren't high going into the tournament," coach Kris Zorza said about the girls, who played through 100-plus degree temperatures for part of the week. "It was 101 degrees at one



Submitted photo

DISTRICT CHAMPS: Hood River Little League's 9/10 All Star squad won last week's district tournament and are off to state, starting this weekend in Scappoose. Pictured are (back) coaches Kris Zorza, Jason Kona and Chris Nickelsen and players (left to right) Aunika Yasui, Reese Leiblein, Celilo Brun, Grace Guertin, Kyla Zorza, Mikayla Matthews, Yulee Kona, Molly Routson, Jessa Nickelsen, Mollie Ritoch, Taylor Beam and Bella Moore.

point, which was pretty tough. It was so hot during one game that players were taking water breaks in the middle of innings just to cool off. The girls played through it and really came together as a team; it was awesome. And a lot of people came down to support the girls, which we really appreciated."

Coaches Jason Kona, Chris Nickelsen and Zorza will work with the girls daily through this week before traveling to Scappoose for the state tournament, which is the highest level the girls can play to at that age. Their first game will be Saturday in the double-elimination bracket.

"They're taking it pretty seriously," Zorza said. "These kids don't like to

lose."

For the Hood River boys teams, all three won multiple games and came within a round or two of the finals before being eliminated in the consolation bracket. Starting with the oldest, the 11/12 boys, a 5-4 win against Hermiston in the opening round turned out to be one of the best games of the bracket. Hermiston fought back later in the tournament to defeat Hood River by a single run to knock them out of the bracket and advance to the finals, where the team defeated The Dalles 3-1 to claim the title.

The 10/11 boys started off with a

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