

Youngsters start flag football season

Nine teams to play twice a week

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Some of the area's brightest young sports talent kicked off the Goodland Activities Center's flag football season earlier this month.

Thirty-eight first and second graders on five teams and 28 third and fourth graders on four teams are playing flag football this fall, with games on Monday and Thursday nights at 5:15 and 6 p.m. behind North Elementary School.

Two fields, each 25 feet wide and 50 feet long, are marked off so four teams can play at a time. There's a national NFL Flag Football League, said center Director Chris Thompson, and kids play by those rules. There are five kids on the field at a time for each team, he said.

Flag football has become more advanced in recent years, Thompson said.

"When we were kids," he said, "we used socks hanging out of our pockets. Now they have flags that make a pop when they get them. They're pretty nice; you can definitely tell when someone got the flag."

The season started later this year than in previous years, Thompson said, on Monday, Sept. 10. It was a hot summer, and the fair interfered with the normal start time, so the season didn't start until after school began.

Starting later made time for more kids to decide to sign up in the younger groups, he said, but there weren't enough fifth and sixth graders to form teams.

Tackle football for fifth and sixth graders (the Junior Cowboys) cut into flag football's numbers, Thompson said. Tackle football has its place, he said, but flag football gives everyone a chance to throw,



Quarterback Evan Peter was under pressure from Wence Hendrich (No. 2) and Chase Johnson, as he looked for a receiver in one of the flag football games Thursday, Sept. 13, behind North Elementary. Zane Shores (far left) tried to block Devin Jipping, a potential receiver. Photo by Sharon Corcoran/The Goodland Star-News

receive, run and block. All the kids get to try every position, he said, and they have fun playing.

"At the end of the year," he said, "we have the GAC Bowl, which is kind of like the Superbowl. The kids get pretty excited. It's a lot of fun."

Flag football is not just for boys,

Thompson said; there are a couple of girls playing, and it would be nice to get more. It's not rough and tumble like tackle football, he said; the kids learn fundamentals and teamwork and have fun.

Volunteers coach the teams, Thompson said, and help with other

jobs. Many come from the city and school district.

"We couldn't have a league without the volunteer coaches," he said. "We're very fortunate to have local people to step up, organize things and help the kids."

There are so many programs,

he said, that sometimes the school district is taken for granted, but it provides facilities for a lot of the center's events.

Since the season started late, he said, there will be problems with running out of daylight before the season is over. The city has agreed

to let them use the outfields at the city ball park and the lights if they need them, he said.

The season will end the first week of October, Thompson said, and by then, they probably will need the lights.

The first and second grade teams are:

Team 1: Coach, Leon Volk. Players, Garin Ihrig, Luke Hamilton, Chandler VanAllen, Champ King, Reyes Bustillos, Kennedy Shelley, Ryan Volk and Gavin Linnell.

Team 2: Coach, Brad Ensign. Players, Chase Johnson, Duncan Kroskey, Wence Hendrich, Lucas Wood, Levi House, Zane Shores and Dawson Ensign.

Team 3: Coach, Darol Peter. Players, Robert Lawson, Ryan Lolicker, Travis Vrbka, Brandt Mull, Devin Jipping, Keaton Tesmer, Evan Peter and Hunter Helton.

Team 4: Coach, Steve Rains. Players, Jordan Raby, Bryce Raby, Talon Poulosom, Levi Archer, Javier Marin, Powell and Peyton Sieck and Caleb Rains.

Team 5: Coach, Wayne Grammon. Players, Colter Klemm, Joseph Thompkins, Dawson Raymer, Rafael Macias, Darby Seeger, Austin Neufeld and Aaron Grammon.

Third and fourth grade teams:

Team 1: Coach, Dan Knitig. Sponsor, Carquest. Players, Nolan Deeds, Noah Hernandez, Zane Bateman, Hiram Hendrich, Arron Arteaga, Taitem Jones and Cole Knitig.

Team 2: Coach, Aron Hernandez. Sponsor, Eklund Insurance. Players, Jacob Brown, Alex Goodwin, Austin Shelley, Drew House, Brock Butts, Austin Hernandez and Calvin Linnell.

Team 3: Coach, Mark Gillming. Sponsor, First National Bank. Players, Hagan Hoss, Matt Woods, Alec Gonzales, Brevin Bergsma, Jacob Stasser, Koal Atzer and Dillon Gillming.

Team 4: Coach, Andy Kear. Sponsor, Evans, Bierly Hutchison and Associates. Players, Isaac Walton, Kate Zelfer, Luke Avila, Tristan Cooper, Mason Fritz, Orlando Wooten and Tyler Gastineau.

Flatlander organizer asks visitors bureau for help

By Sharon Corcoran
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A Flatlander Festival organizer asked the Sherman County Convention and Visitors Bureau for support, but the bureau's board decided its couldn't afford financial support but will offer volunteers.

Brent Wood, a festival committee board member and owner of AIG Financial Advisors, approached the bureau at its scheduled meeting Thursday, Aug. 23, but since there wasn't a quorum, no action could be taken. Wood spoke to the board again at its meeting last Tuesday. Board members said recent guest

tax numbers indicate the bureau could end up with less money than it planned, and this isn't the time to spend more.

The festival has been expanded to include the golf tournament on Friday and the picnic in the park on Sunday, Wood said, and organizers plan to continue adding events and features.

Even in the late stages of planning this year, he said, another band has been added to the Picnic in the Park entertainment, and the Colorado Tractor Puller's Association has decided to have a display on Main between 16th and 17th streets on

Saturday until 3 p.m., and they will then go to the land next to Herl Chevrolet-Buick and behind the building where Subway is for pulling demonstrations at 3:30 p.m.

"I think we should support the festival," said board member Brenda McCants. "My only concern is budget limitations."

The board had talked earlier about the guest tax collections. The bureau budgeted \$105,000 for the year, said Director Donna Price, and could end up short of that by as much as \$5,000. Once the August guest tax is in, she said, she would be more certain.

June and July guest tax was down from last year: \$10,837 collected in June last year and \$11,346 last July compared to \$9,548 and \$9,562.

"There's no way that could be," said Board member Ryan Hageman, Wendy's manager. "I'm up 20 percent."

Board member Lincoln Wilson, owner of the Howard Johnson Hotel, said July was not a good month for him, but Bill Stoick, owner of Super 8, said he was up 15 percent.

Price has asked County Treasurer Iris Scheopner to check on whether everyone who should be collecting guest tax has paid, said board Chair

Dale Neill, and there are penalties for paying late.

Price said the bureau has \$9,000 already committed to billboard leases, painting and installing billboards and to the I-70 Association. With that, she said, the bureau has about \$1,000 that's not committed.

The bureau might help the festival committee next year, Wilson, a member of the committee, said.

"We need the cash," he said, "but we don't need it that badly. We won't take your last \$300."

"If the CVB doesn't have the cash, are there other things we can do to help?" McCants asked.

The committee needs volunteers, Wilson said, to cook burgers and serve sodas at the picnic, to monitor holes at the golf tournament and to help with the festival downtown.

The bureau can also look ahead to next year, Stoick said, to help with postage, printing and supplies. The bureau has "coozies" (drink can insulators), letter openers and pens it could donate, Price said. The committee needs some things for golf tournament prizes, Wilson said, and things to put in the welcome bags.

Survey shows more Kansans are using seatbelts

More Kansans are buckling up, based on survey results announced Friday at Kansas Department of Transportation headquarters in Topeka.

The survey results show 75 percent of Kansans are using their seat belts, an increase of 2 percent from 73 percent last year.

"Any increase in seat belt use is encouraging," said Pete Bodyk, director of the Bureau of Traffic Safety. "To continue to have gains

in the statewide use rate is a positive thing, but we have a long way to go."

Last year, Kansas ranked 43rd in the nation in seat belt use, Bodyk said. The state's low seatbelt usage can be partially attributed to not having a primary seat belt law, which means drivers cannot be pulled over for not wearing seat belts, he said. However, if a driver is pulled over for another infraction and is not wearing a seat belt, he or

she can be ticketed, Bodyk said.

"The statistics are clear that the best way to reduce fatalities and injuries on Kansas roadways is through proper seat belt use," Bodyk said. "States with a primary seat belt law show higher seat belt use rates and lower fatality rates."

Seat belt use among Kansas children improved, Bodyk said. One reason he gave could be passage of the booster amendment to the Kansas Child Passenger Safety Act,

a primary law allowing drivers to be stopped and ticketed if children are not properly restrained.

Results showed increases in each age group he said: up to age 4, 88 percent, up from 83 percent; age 5-9, 61 percent, up from 53 percent; and age 10-14, 54 percent, up from 48 percent.

Each year, surveys throughout the state gauge the percentage of motorists who are buckling up. Based on federal guidelines, the surveys are

conducted at 548 sites on six road types in 20 randomly selected counties which encompass 85 percent of the state's population. The survey included more than 47,000 vehicle observations, Bodyk said.

corrections

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Wednesday, Sept. 26
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1-800-GIVE LIFE. Walk-ins welcome; however, those with appointments will be given priority.
The best time to walk in is between 2 - 4 p.m.

Donors must be in general good health, weigh 110 pounds or more, and be at least 17 years old (16 in Kansas with completed Parental Consent Form. Visit www.bloodgiveslife.org to print the required consent form and reading materials.)

American Red Cross