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THE GROWLER

Odessa High School, Odessa, Missouri

JV Boys Soccer overcome challenges this inaugural season

By Alex Wood

OHS JV soccer team ended its season October 16, while making history along with the varsity squad, as the first soccer team in Odessa's history. The team ended its debut season 1-11, and the path was littered with hard-fought and close games demonstrating the team's improvement over time.

Justin Griffith, freshman JV midfielder, said he is glad he played soccer for the first time.

"I thought it would be a good experience to try something new, and it was," Griffith said.

Griffith said he enjoyed the environment of the team

and being around friends. He recalled the team's first goal against Clinton, scored by Mason Hawkins, junior.

"It was really fun, just running it up the field and kicking it. It was fun seeing that we finally scored," Griffith said.

Overall, Griffith said the team has come a long way since the beginning of the season, and he has faith in the future of the organization. He plans to play soccer again next year as well.

"We need better passing skills and communication because we don't talk to each other, and a lot of balls go by us. For a first year program, though, we did pretty good, but I think we still have a long way to go," Griffith said.



JAY BANHART, junior JV soccer player, kicks the ball away from the goal to prevent his opponent from scoring.

The JV Team lost 0-9 to Oak Grove the first time they matched up, but closed the gap to only 0-1 in their second contest. According to Samuel Hughes, JV coach, the team performed well under pressure, especially considering they have only been organized for a few months.

"There's no lack of effort on the JV side," Hughes continued. "Numbers were good, and a lot of teams don't have that luxury."

Despite the advantage of having plenty of players, there were challenges facing the inaugural team, as Hughes explained.

"Really, in a sense, being a

new team was the biggest challenge," Hughes said. "Other teams already had their framework, and the whole goal the first season is to build up that framework. I would say we did a fair job of that."

Hughes added that teaching the fundamentals of the game and game strategy from scratch was also a challenge, as well as keeping the team's morale up from game to game.



New Stadium breathes new life into all Odessa sports teams

By Victoria Miller

Odessa High School's new stadium has a different feel to it. It is like the difference between a black and white and color photograph. The vibrant colors and added amenities, like new concession areas, restrooms, press box, and bleachers catch the eyes of the fans. The cushioned track springs when it is walked on, and the turf smells like new tires.

OHS's new stadium saw its first play on August 18 when the football team defeated St. Pius X, 22-17 after a rain delay. However, the players did not have to struggle with muddy conditions as the new turf provided a stable surface.

The new stadium has numerous benefits. The playing surface gives students an opportunity to use it before, during and after school. Sporting teams and band and guard members

practice or compete on the surface daily, and weights and P. E. teachers take their students out on the field when weather permits for running and conditioning. Little league football and soccer programs use the field as well for practices and games.

MSHSAA also awarded OHS with the Class 3 Track and Field Sectional Meet in 2018, so the new stadium will see competitors from up to 23 schools in central and northern Missouri.

Josey Meierarend, sophomore quarterback, spends a lot of time on the field and appreciates the turf; however, he noted that he now gets a lot of turf burns.

"It is easier to run on and makes the team faster as a whole," Meierarend said. "There are no holes, so you don't have to worry about tripping or

twisting your ankle."

Eli Munsterman, senior band member, said he was excited to try out the new field for his last year of marching.

"It looks so nice," Munsterman said. "The new field is easier to march on too because the short turf makes it easier to slide your feet and use proper marching technique."

He joked that the turf pieces get everywhere. "It is in the band room, the drumline closet and in the band locker room."

However, Munsterman noted that when the band has early morning practice, it is faster to get to the new field than the old practice one.

"It gives the school a better image," Munsterman said. "With hosting the Odessa Marching Invitational, I believe the new field attracted more bands because they didn't have to worry about it

being wet and muddy."

Olivia Dale, senior color guard member, said she was ecstatic to dance on the field for her last spinning season.

"I like to dance on the turf because you don't have to worry about tripping in holes," Dale said. "It is easier to pick out little details, so we can clean up the show. We can get a lot more done. However, your feet burn when it is hot and sunny outside!"

Prior to the new stadium, the band sat on bleachers in an endzone away from the crowd.

"I like sitting with the students. I feel like we are more involved in everything that the students do at the football games," Dale said.

Rebecca Westmoreland, head Color Guard coach and OMS Language Arts teacher, is an OHS alumna who was a guard

member when the field was grass.

"It was a long time coming," Westmoreland said. "The town needed it. The new field allows students to participate in more sports. Having a turf field has made our performance better in comparison to the grass that had a dip in the middle. The turf has holes under it so it can drain itself, so the water doesn't stay on it and make it slick."

Kaylin Hotmer, sophomore cheerleader, said they have to cheer louder due to the larger stadium but enjoy not having to face the sun.

"I really like the new stadium. It is so much bigger, and the stands are nice," Hotmer said. "The new track makes cheering easier. We can get a better grip on it, so we can do more stunts."

OHS C team volleyball goes out with a bang



EYE ON THE PRIZE | Kennedy Kleoppel bumps the ball.

By Holley Salisbury
OHS C Team volleyball ended the season with a first place win on October 14 in the Blue Springs Tournament. The win was hard-fought after a long day including back-to-back games.

"They had to figure out how to dig down deep and push through and finish out the day," Ashley Ray, coach, said. "It worked for them."

The team ended the season 16-5-3 under the direction of Ray. Ray was the only returning coach. Nicole Madsen was hired as head coach after summer activities had already started, and Melanie DeMore is the new JV coach.

Ray said they made a few changes for the season, with one being a reduction in players.

"We were kind of tight on our numbers this year. We wanted to tighten things up, so we could have the best quality to offer," Ray said.

The teams borrowed players back and forth throughout the season. C Team had to juggle schedules with girls in band activities, and the other teams had some injuries and illnesses to deal with; however, Ray noted that was not a problem.

"We are deep and can make changes on the fly," Ray said. "We were focusing that while we are three teams, we are still the Odessa Volleyball Program. At any point we should be able to pick up and support each other no matter which jersey we have on."

Some of the most aggressive players, according to Ray, were

Madisyn Ellis, Kylie Cockrum and Sydney Futrell. Ellis was an aggressive hitter to start the season.

"Kylie Cockrum, middle, was timid and shy at the beginning of the year," Ray said, "but she ended the season being very aggressive at the net and added a good energy to the team."

Futrell, middle, decided to switch over from softball and played her first season of volleyball with the program.

"I played volleyball in the eighth grade but decided to give softball a try, but I just didn't have the passion for softball that I did for volleyball," Futrell said.

"She (Futrell) was a lot of fun to have on the team, and she had a lot of energy," Ray said.

Peyton Hagerty was also a strong player for the team, according to Ray.

"She had strong setting skills and was an aggressive hitter on the right side," Ray said.

One of the most improved players, Ray noted, was Kennedy Kleoppel, who played libero.

"She (Kleoppel) developed a good foundation of passing skills and court awareness," Ray said.

Lyndsey Roseler was a great leader for this year's team, according to Ray. She served as setter and right side hitter this year, which was a new position for her. Last year she began as a right side hitter and switched to middle hitter.

"She did that beautifully," Ray said. "She will step up and do whatever she needs to do."

Hazelrigg beats bench press record

By Hanna Goodman

Clayton Hazelrigg, OHS senior, beat the school bench press record on October 17 with a hefty lift of 405 pounds. Beating the record is a goal he has been working towards.

"I expected to break the record, but I only let myself be happy for about 10 minutes before moving on," Hazelrigg said.

"It couldn't have happened to a better kid. He's earned it. He is a very self-motivated kid," Kirk Gross, OHS wrestling coach, said.

Hazelrigg or "Big Rig" as he is called by coaches and teammates, is relatively new to lifting. He only started lifting weights his sophomore year because Gross recommended it to improve his strength for wrestling. Hazelrigg said that Gross has taught him so much about weightlifting and has contributed to his success.

"Coach Gross has taught me more about lifting than anyone else," Hazelrigg said.

Along with Hazelrigg's record-setting bench max, he has

high maxes on other lifts too. He squats 405 pounds and can hang clean 275 pounds.

Hazelrigg said he enjoys lifting with Gross most of all because they lift close to the same weight.

"It's one of those things where it's kinda bittersweet when you pass the baton on to the student, and you want them to be better than you," Gross said. "I want him to be stronger than me, but sometimes it's humbling saying he is stronger than me now."

In addition to wrestling, Hazelrigg is involved in Chess Club and Concert Choir. He enjoys volunteering at his church, and he is dedicated to Boy Scouts. He is a senior patrol leader, the top youth leader, elected by the Scouts.

Hazelrigg hopes to go to college for wrestling, but he does not know what he wants to major in yet. However, he is looking forward to wrestling season and putting his strength to the test.



HAZELRIGG RAISES THE BAR | Clayton Hazelrigg, senior, benches 405 pounds to beat the previous record.

Danielle Wildschuetz was an outside hitter. She is a returning player and continues to improve according to Ray. Ray noted the team is "solid" with outside hitters.

"I enjoy coaching C team because they have lots of high energy and random conversations. Definitely a fun group of girls," Ray said.

Ray said that she "lovingly" calls herself the girls' cat post because they wipe their hands on her during timeouts. Something else that stands out to Ray about this team is their use of the "dink." Ray said the team's motto was "bringing the dink back."

The dink, Ray said, is a 90s move of punching the ball over the net that was popular back when she played. She said the team had fun with the retro move.

Ray said she wanted to see the team talk more on the court, but she said it can be surprisingly hard for a group of girls.

"We talk a lot in the locker room, but don't always do it well out on the court. I want them to be calling the balls and encouraging each other," Ray said.

Ray said the team is going to make mistakes, but that doesn't mean they should stop swinging.

"We have to get back out there and stay aggressive and don't get timid. We wanted to work on how to dig deep and fight through moments when things aren't going how you want them to. We wanted to build some resilience," Ray said.

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Swanson joins teaching and coaching staff at OHS



FAMILY FIRST | Matt Swanson, OHS head soccer coach and history teacher, enjoys hiking in Little Rock with his family.

By Kiley Adams

Matt Swanson is enjoying his new position at OHS as an American and world history teacher. He is also taking on the daunting task of starting the soccer program from the ground up.

Swanson coaches the boys and girls varsity teams and is assisted by Samuel Hughes, OHS paraprofessional.

Swanson graduated from Arizona State University with a dual major in education and history, along with minors in world economics, world geography and political science.

Before coming to Odessa, Swanson taught at Raymore-Peculiar High School for six years where he taught middle school science. He also coached soccer at Ray-Pec for four years.

"It was a great opportunity to start a soccer team in Odessa and get back into high school social studies," Swanson said. "It's very stressful bringing soccer to Odessa. We spend a lot of time working on very minute skills such as how to kick and receive a ball properly."

He said that even though they often find themselves working on skills at levels the established programs don't start with, it will definitely get easier with time.

Swanson and his wife, Sherri, have two children, Megan and Nick. They live in Lee's Summit. Swanson began coaching when his daughter started playing soccer. Swanson's daughter is the starting keeper for the University of Arkansas Little Rock, where she is a freshman.

Swanson grew up in Edina, Minnesota where they didn't have a soccer program. So, he began playing hockey and continued the sport through college.

"They are very similar positions. One just has a bigger net and a bigger field, but they both have the same basic concepts."

He played goalie in hockey, and his daughter plays goalie in soccer. Swanson noted that because he and his daughter shared similar positions in the sports they played, it made it easier for him to coach her.

OMS revamps student award system

By Ashley Dye

OMS is revising the student awards with the former Student of the Month being revamped into the Bulldog of the Month and the Bulldog of the Year recognition systems according to Cole Doherty, OMS sixth grade math teacher.

"We wanted this to be a bigger deal," Doherty said, "to help show the students that these are students exhibiting traits that we want every student to show."

Doherty, who is new to OMS, is the head of the Bulldog of the Month awards. Doherty was appointed to the position by Kendra Malizzi, principal. Doherty said he has several plans.

"Mr. Doherty has taken on the schoolwide Bulldog of the Month with great enthusiasm and spirit," Malizzi said. "He even ordered a new board to recognize the winners all year long with a new bulldog logo.

It is hanging in the commons. I really like how Mr. Doherty made new changes to reward our students."

Doherty said they give the monthly winners a T-shirt (designed by Doherty) with the hashtag for the month on the back. Hashtags are words or phrases that follow the symbol #, and they are used to label messages by topic. They have developed from social media sites such as Twitter or Facebook.

The winners get their lockers decorated, their names displayed on a sign by the office, their pictures published in *The Odessan*, a pizza party with Malizzi and Chris Doering, assistant principal/AD and receive a certificate and medal.

Doherty and the other teacher leaders chose the Bulldog of the month winners. Hash tag for September was #together-we-can.

"Being student of the month gives me a lot of pride that my teacher chose me," Brenden Jeffery, eighth-grader, said. "The month's hashtag (October) was #be yourself, and to me that means not doing everything everybody else does. Do what you like and what you want to do."

At the end of the school year, Doherty said that all monthly winners will compete against each other for the title of Bulldog of the year. Two students from each grade will be chosen, and the winners will win a trip to Odessa Creamery with the principals. The winners will also receive a plaque.

Doherty said that awarding Bulldog of the Year will help students to keep up their good behavior.

"It's not just a one-and-done kind of thing because they can still strive for Bulldog of the Year," Doherty said.

Annual zoo field trip for first grade

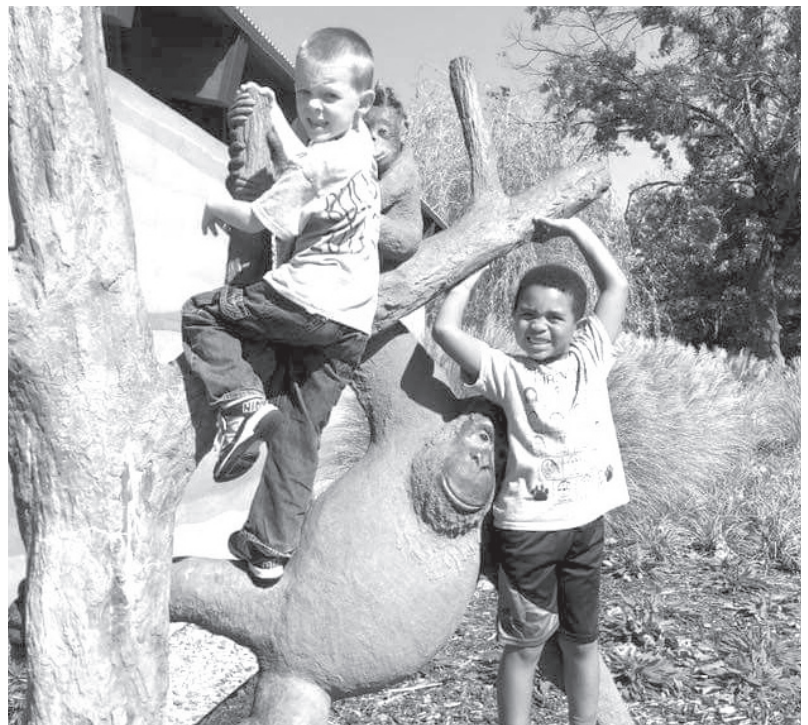
By Jenna Roncelli

McQuerry Elementary first-graders attended a field trip on October 13 to the Kansas City Zoo. The annual trip to the zoo reinforces what the students learn about animals and provides opportunities to see the animals firsthand.

"It fits into our curriculum because we learn about animals," Kasey Kelmel, first grade teacher, said. "We talk about the structures of animals and their needs. For example, penguins live in a cooler climate, so when they are in Kansas City, they have to have a special building for them. Different animals have different needs."

During the trip, students get to see and learn about animals including elephants, penguins, gorillas, polar bears and more.

"They loved the polar bears," Kelmel said. "There was a baby gorilla. It was really cute, and the students liked that a lot.



MONKEYING AROUND | Jonah Durrill and Tysyn Baldwin, first-graders in Melissa Everett's class, enjoy the annual field trip to the Kansas City Zoo.

The penguins are always a huge hit too."

"My favorite part was learning that the polar bears could swim," Adrianna Williams,

first-grader in Kelmel's class, said.

"It's a fun place to take the kids, and we have a lot of parent volunteers," Kelmel said.

32 OUE students rewarded for meeting fundraising goals



PTO SCREAMS FOR ICE CREAM | Christlyn Dodd, fourth-grader, Kyla Stokes and Emmalee Osciak, third-graders, enjoy the ice cream party.

By Shayne Lewis & Gracee Gurney

Thirty-two OUE students enjoyed an ice cream celebration on October 17 as a reward for meeting PTO fundraising goals. Top sellers also attended a slime party and got to ride in a limo to Pizza Hut.

"It was very fun. It was so worth it. I enjoyed raising money and helping out my school," Abigail White, fifth-grader said.

To join in the ice cream celebration, students had to meet the fundraising goal of selling ten items including cookie dough, pretzels, holiday wrapping paper, etc.

The rewards for the fundraiser were tiered, and 13 students sold 15 or more items and also

earned the opportunity to slime a teacher.

The slime party was October 23 where students slimed Adam Couch, Mayor of Odessa, with a mixture of cornstarch, food coloring and warm water.

The final reward included a limo ride to Pizza Hut for lunch. Eight students sold 20 items or more and attended: Kalie Stocklaufer, Cameron Clubine, Fiona Reynolds, Logan Valverde and Abigail White, fifth-graders; Lynkyn McElmurry, fourth-grader; and Charlye Adams and Lola Walter, third-graders.

Funds raised will be used for technology, school field trips and for school parties. The students raised almost \$5,000.

OMS Football team loaded with talent ends 5-1

By Sydney Futrell

OMS football team ended the season 5-1, only losing to Pleasant Hill. Kirk Gross, head coach and OHS health teacher, was assisted by Don Aulbert and Chris Herring, OMS teachers.

The team was hard-working, according to Gross, and overcame a rough spot when a player was injured towards the end of the season. Boston Sanders was unable to participate in the last several games due to an injury received when a defender pulled him back.

"I was upset I got hurt because I was having a lot of fun, and we were on a winning streak," Sanders said. "I also just got back from sitting out basketball season because of the same injury, but I am looking forward to playing in high school because of all the opportunities it will open up for me."

Sanders was a running back on offense and a linebacker on defense. He was also the team's punter and kicker.

"Sanders was a big part of our team," Gross said, "but the other players had no hesitation to step up and help the team out. The team worked exceptionally well together especially when they learned that it's more of a team sport than trying to better yourself for yourself."

Gross said the first week or so he focuses more on drills and building the boys into a better unit. The only struggle with the team, according to Gross, is that they're all talented football players, so it was hard to play



BRENDEN JEFFERY, OMS football player, prepares to pass the ball to a teammate.

everyone and distribute the playing time evenly.

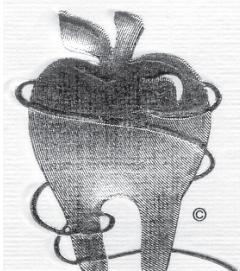
"They all worked hard and contributed to the team," Gross said. "They did a great job of doing everything we asked them and putting in the time and work to get better."

Gross said that the boys lifted weights in the mornings at 6 a.m., and they had almost all of them there and working hard.

Gross, who has coached the middle school team for four years, said he loves it. He enjoys working with Aulbert and Herring as well.

"They both are very positive people with high energy and great coaches," Gross said about Aulbert and Herring. "They are great motivators and have very knowledgeable football minds."

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