

Anderson lifts Elgin in closing seconds

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

Caysie McGinness had just broken free for a layup out of a timeout to pull the Imbler Panthers girls basketball team even with the Elgin Huskies in the final minute and erase a 10-point deficit.

Elgin, however, got the last word. Tymra Anderson, who had 20 points and nine rebounds, followed McGinness' layup with a basket of her own with 10 seconds to play, and the Huskies held on for a 34-32 road win over Imbler Saturday in Old Oregon League play.

"It was definitely needed," Anderson said of the win for her team, which was coming off a 34-point loss to Joseph a

night earlier. "Our mentality was down in the gutter and we had no idea how we were going to play. We just knew we needed to win."

Elgin controlled most of the contest, leading by as much as 12 points in the first half and taking a 26-16 lead into the fourth following a short field goal and a free throw from Kaelin Evans.

But Imbler scored the first nine points of the fourth, getting within three when McGinness banked in a 3-pointer and as close at 26-25 on a jumper in the lane by Shay Goodman.

Anderson pushed the margin back to 32-26 later with a layup before McGinness, who led the way with 21 points, rattled off six points in the span of a

minute on two layups, including the tying drive, and two free throws.

Elgin rushed down the court, where Anderson broke free, took a pass from Gracie Evans on the low block and scored the winner.

"We just let them go with the flow and it worked out," Elgin Head Coach Brian Evans said. "Super proud of Tymra. She's got heart and never gives up."

The win was also big for Elgin, as the Huskies were able to get back to .500 in OOL play.

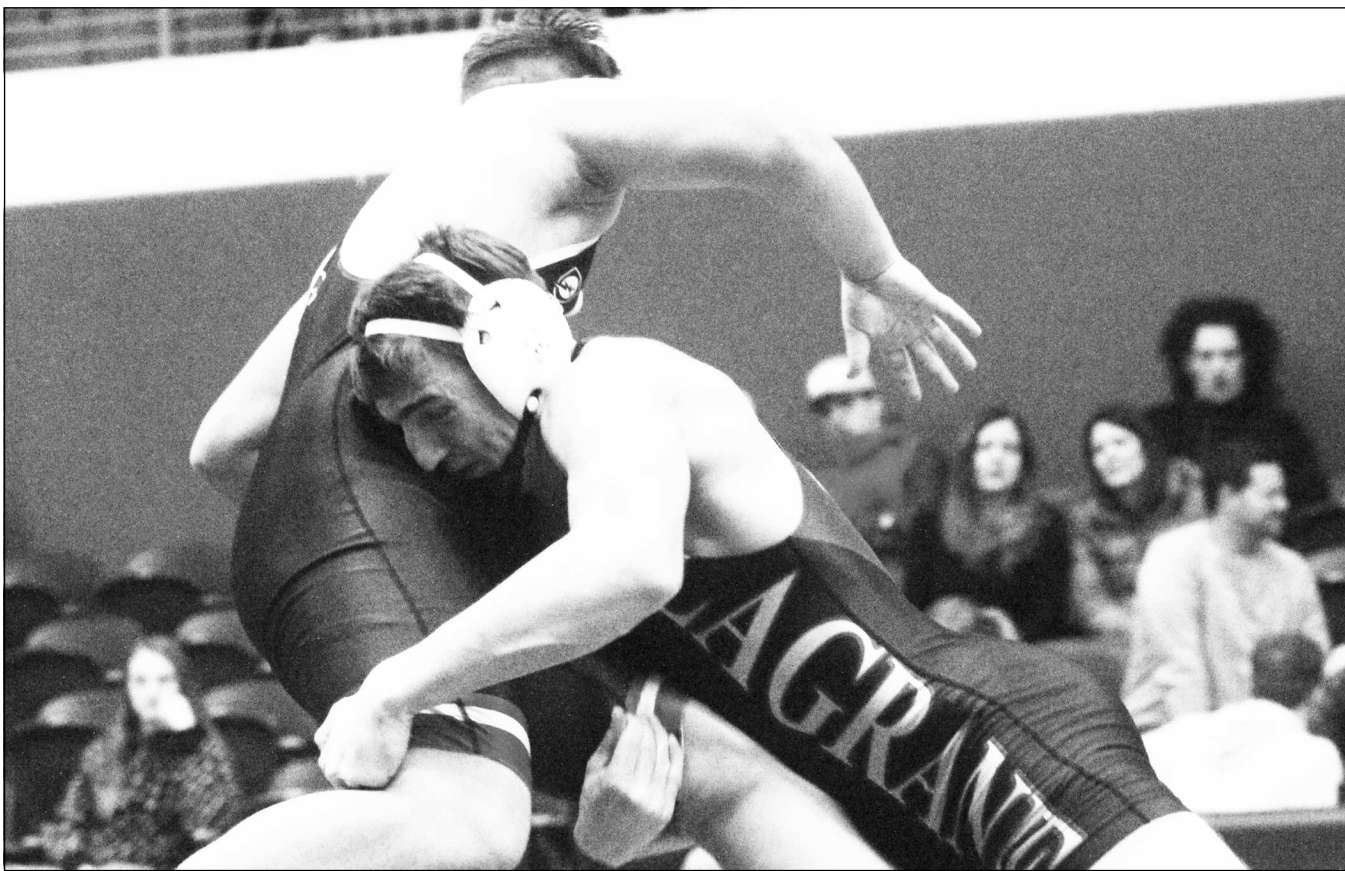
"This was a very important game for us," the coach said. "I feel like you've got Joseph, Powder (Valley), and that third place position (to state) is up for grabs."

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Ronald Bond/The Observer

Elgin's Jayden Palmer, right, drives to the basket past Imbler's Caysie McGinness Saturday. Elgin scored in the final seconds for a 34-32 Old Oregon League win.



Ronald Bond/The Observer

La Grande's Christopher Woodworth takes down his opponent from Parma, Idaho, Sean Wilhite, during the Tigers' 63-9 win over the Panthers Friday at Quinn Coliseum. LHS and EOU teamed up for a combined dual.

LHS, EOU slam opposition

By Ronald Bond
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The Eastern Oregon and La Grande wrestling teams have been trying to organize a combined dual since the EOU program made its return three years ago.

They finally did on Friday, and the result was three victories for the home teams.

"I'm glad Klel and I got together and started talking about that. It's been in the works since I was hired on," EOU Head Coach Dustyn Azure said. "I'm glad it finally came to fruition."

La Grande opened the event at Quinn Coliseum with a 63-9 rout of Parma, Idaho. The EOU men followed with a 33-14 victory over Warner Pacific, and the Eastern women wrapped up the night with an 8-6 win against Warner Pacific.

The Tigers had little issue against Parma, a team Head Coach Klel Carson admitted he wasn't entirely sure about. It was quickly evident the Panthers would be no match for LHS.

Spencer Gerst (220 pounds) needed just 82 seconds to pin Juan Muniz in the opening bout of the night to set the tone. It was one of seven victories by fall for La Grande, and 12 wins in all.

The Tigers also earned wins by fall from Bella Gulzow (106), Casey McCall (138), Keith Oswald (152), Parker Robinson (170), Grayson Livingston (182) and Chris Woodworth (195). Five of the seven pins came in the first round.

"They were a little young and they were missing a couple kids in their lineup," Carson said of Parma.

Gulzow's victory, which came in 1:41 against Kenny

Forsberg was one of the highlights for LHS, as the sophomore said she's getting some momentum after taking fourth in the girls bracket at the Rollie Lane Invitational last weekend. It was her third win on the mat since the start of January after just one victory in December.

"I feel like at Rollie Lane, it clicked. I went out more aggressive than ever," she said.

Gulzow added she is working through some early lumps and frustrations of "getting beat by boys" and is seeing the payoff.

"I'm noticing myself getting better," she said. "The fact I'm improving is making me love wrestling more and more."

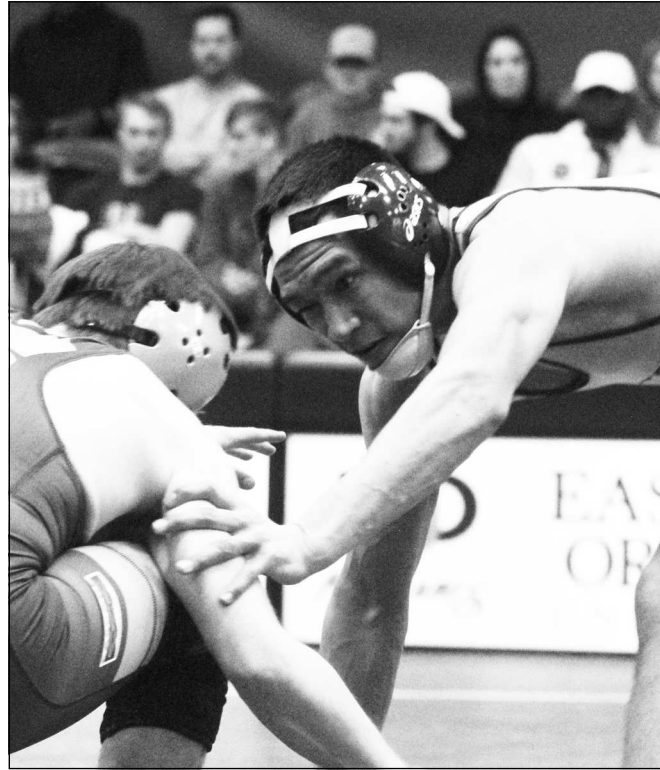
The match of the night for La Grande came a few minutes later with Brody MacMillian (145) locked up against Parma's Chase Scroggins in one of the only close bouts. MacMillian was down 4-0 late in the second round before securing a takedown and three-point nearfall in the closing seconds for a 5-4 lead. He extended the lead to 7-5 in the third, then locked up the victory with another takedown and a two-point nearfall to earn an 11-5 decision.

"I'm super proud of that kid," Carson said. "For a freshman wrestling those middle-weights (is) not an easy thing to do, and he just keeps finding a way to win."

Cody Hibbert (113) and Ezra McIntosh (126) both scored 17-2 technical falls for the Tigers. Gabe Shukle (285) locked up a 13-1 major decision and Braden Carson (132) notched an 11-3 major decision.

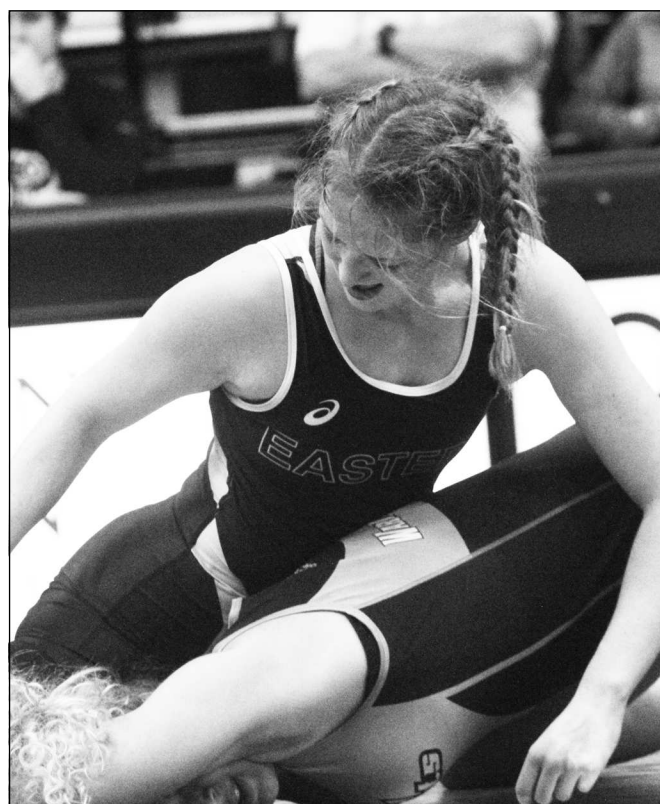
The EOU men followed by shaking off a tough loss at North Idaho the night before

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Ronald Bond/The Observer

Eastern Oregon's Mhar Caballa, right, led the Mountaineers to a 33-14 win over Warner Pacific Friday.



Ronald Bond/The Observer

Renay Monohan, top, scored a 10-0 technical fall to lead the EOU women to an 8-6 victory over Warner Pacific.

Huskies pick up win at Imbler



Ronald Bond/The Observer

Elgin's Ian Adams, left, attempts to block a shot by Imbler's Grant Slater Saturday during the Huskies' 41-39 win. Adams was called for a foul on the play.

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

It wasn't always pretty. In fact, the game got dicey down the stretch.

But with points at a premium in the second half, the Elgin Huskies boys basketball team did just enough to secure a 41-39 road win over the Imbler Panthers Saturday in Old Oregon League action.

"The basketball was not doing what it was supposed to," Huskies Head Coach Kevin Johnson said. "But (when) you get adversity, you have a hard time scoring and getting any momentum going, (the key is) just staying strong."

Elgin seemed to be in control late in what had been a low-scoring second half, taking a 36-29 lead with 1:49 to play on two Ian Smith free throws.

But Imbler, which to that point had just seven points in the second half, found a spark to get closer. Two Grant Slater free throws and a jumper by Jayce Burnette cut the gap to three. Gage McKay pushed the lead back to 38-33 with a layup. Imbler hung around by taking advantage of missed free throws by Elgin, but saw a chance to cut the deficit to two late snuffed out on a blocked shot by Brandon Caldwell. A Smith free throw and a steal and layup by McKay extended the margin to 41-34, and the Huskies held on.

"It was not the cleanest basketball, but sometimes it happens when two teams have to scrap to find any sort of offensive flow," Imbler Head Coach Tony Haddock said.

That was definitely the case in the second half.

The teams went nearly six minutes without scoring to open the third quarter, with the score sitting at 23-22 Elgin until a Tristan Simpson steal and layup broke the

ice. Imbler needed nearly all eight minutes to finally score on a Slater layup with 11 seconds to play in the third.

The struggles extended into the fourth quarter until the final minutes. In the half, the teams combined to shoot 30 percent, miss 20 free throws (10 each) and commit 27 turnovers.

Johnson said what gave his team the edge was its effectiveness when it did maintain possession.

"On our offensive end the guys were disciplined with taking care of the ball and moving it around, keeping track of it and trying to get good shots," he said.

Haddock said Elgin brought a higher level of grit Saturday.

In a game where you have two teams that offensively don't do anything amazing you have to scratch and fight and claw for every bucket, (and) they were better at that than us tonight," he said.

Kaden McClure scored 15 points, including 13 in the first half, to lead the Huskies. McKay and Simpson both added eight.

Slater and Burnette set the table offensively for the Panthers with 13 and 12 points, respectively.

Elgin (8-4 overall, 3-1 OOL) visits Nixyaawii Friday, while Imbler (5-8, 2-2) travels to Cove Friday.

Also Saturday BOBCATS FALL TO LEAGUE-LEADING MUSTANGS

The Union Bobcats boys basketball team dropped to third place in the Blue Mountain Conference following a 73-52 road loss to the BMC-leading Heppner Mustangs on Saturday.

The Mustangs outscored Union in each quarter, and built a double-digit lead at halftime at 36-20 thanks to a 16-5 run in the second quarter.

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