



Ronald Bond/The Observer

La Grande's Ella Dunlap, left, had 15 points and 11 rebounds in the Tigers' win over Ontario Friday.

LHS pulls away after early struggles

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

The La Grande Tigers girls basketball team was noticeably out of sync much of the night Friday against an Ontario Tigers squad it had taken care of three weeks earlier.

A strong fourth quarter with a return to the basics fixed the issue.

La Grande scored the first 15 points of the final period to finally pull away from Ontario as it earned a 47-26 home win in Greater Oregon League play.

"One of the things we need to understand is when we do the things we're capable of doing and that we've been

practicing, things go well for us," La Grande Head Coach Brian Wright said.

For La Grande, that includes getting the post players established and scoring points in transition — tasks the Tigers struggled with as they went to the fourth leading just 30-23.

That changed in the final quarter as La Grande repeatedly got to the rim for easy baskets either on the fast break or by pounding the post. Ella Dunlap and Grace Neer, who scored 15 and 10 points, respectively, to lead La Grande — were two of the main catalysts on offense in the fourth. Neer put in a pair

of transition layups, Dunlap scored twice and Camryn Collman had five of her seven points during the early push to put the game away. Lauran Rinker capped the 15-0 burst with a layup for a 45-23 lead by the midway point of the fourth.

"In the fourth quarter we settled into a little bit of a routine," Wright said. "We've been working really hard to get the kids to push the ball a little harder. We've set a goal — we want to get at least 12 points in transition every game, and that started to work."

The increased tempo and some crisp
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Tigers ride hot start to victory

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

Maybe it was some extra adrenaline flowing from being back at home. Maybe it was the friendly touch of the home rims.

Whatever it was, the La Grande Tigers boys basketball team couldn't miss early on, and the hot start and a torrid second quarter gave La Grande what it needed for a 57-34 blowout home win over the Ontario Tigers Friday in Greater Oregon League play.

"There was some excitement that we got (to play) at home for our second home game," LHS Head Coach Mark Carollo said. "That really helped, I think, just the overall attitude of the boys. And when you're making shots and getting stops on the other end it makes things a lot more enjoyable."

For the first four minutes — from Kaleb Myer's game-opening 3-pointer to a nifty shake-and-bake layup by Nick Tsiatsos for a 14-5 lead — La Grande made every shot it put up, going 6-for-6 for the early edge.

The inevitable cooldown came and Ontario did close within four, and was as close as 15-10 after one quarter, before another surge by LHS put the game in hand.

Braden Bell, who had 14 points, scored to trigger a 16-2 run to start the second for La Grande. It was nearly three minutes before La Grande scored

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Ronald Bond/The Observer

La Grande's Romayne Ricker won all four events — two individual races and two relays — she swam in as the LHS girls won the January Invitational on Saturday.

Pool power on full display

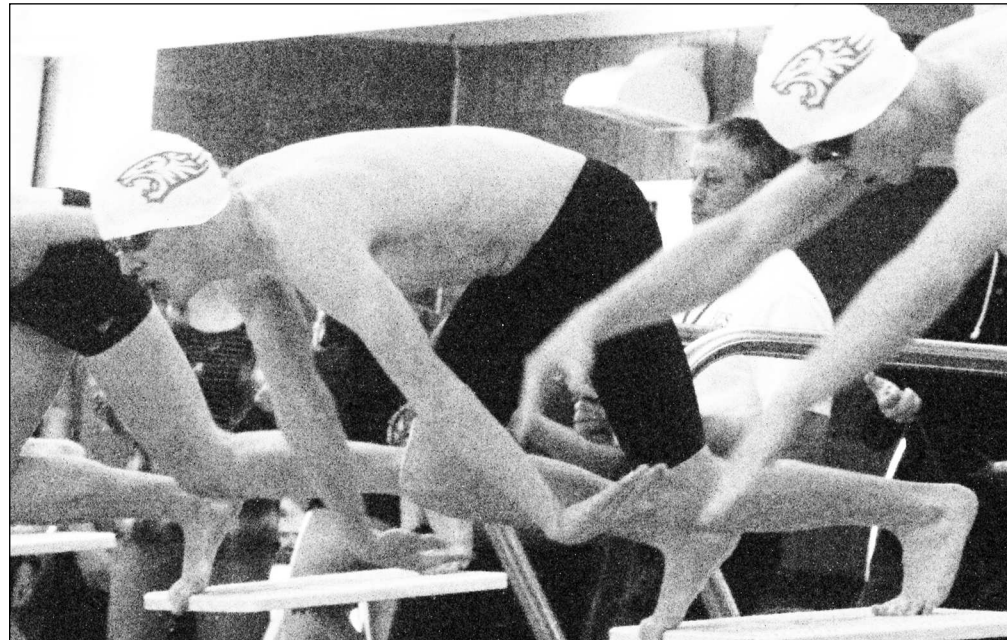
By Ronald Bond
The Observer

The La Grande Tigers girls swim team found itself on top of nearly every race Saturday at Veterans' Memorial Pool, and many LHS swimmers were sprinkled throughout the leaderboard.

The Tigers won nine of 11 races in all and had 10 additional top-four finishes to claim the top spot on the girls side at LHS's January Invite, while a record-setting day by Garren Dutto lifted the boys team to a second-place finish.

"The girls team as a whole did extremely well today," LHS Head Coach Darren Dutto said. "Winning events is great (but) we were good all the way up and down the board. All the kids were dropping times, not just those winning events. It was a good team effort in terms of improvement. I see a lot of real positive movement with the ladies. It bodes well for a couple weeks from now (at the district meet)."

Kristal Jensen and Romayne Ricker helped pow-



Ronald Bond/The Observer

La Grande's Garren Dutto, left, set a new school record in the boys 200-yard individual medley to help the Tigers take second place Saturday.

er the La Grande girls to their 485-point day with four wins each — two in their individual events and two as part of winning relay teams. Jensen recorded a meet-record time of 1:03.02 to win the 100-yard butterfly and 26.00 seconds to take the 50 freestyle, while

Ricker won the 200 individual medley (2:15.98) and the 100 breaststroke (1:12.51). Aryana Bouten and Reagan Kruse teamed up with Jensen and Ricker to take the 200 medley relay (1:58.77), and Laramie Ricker joined her sister Romayne, Jensen and Kruse

for first in the 200 freestyle relay, which posted a meet-record of 1:46.97.

Kruse also won the 100 freestyle (57.96), while her older sister Kennedy claimed first in the 200 freestyle (2:07.27) and the 500 freestyle
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The streak reaches twenty

Observer staff

The No. 10 Eastern Oregon women's basketball team added two more wins to the docket to make it 20 in a row, picking up a pair of blowout home victories over the Walla Walla Wolves Friday and Saturday in Cascade Collegiate Conference play. Friday the Mountaineers won 98-47, and Saturday they followed with a 111-48 beatdown.

In Friday's win, six players reached double figures as the Mountaineers never trailed and at one point led by as many as 52 points. EOU broke the game open with a 19-0 run spanning the first and second quarters, capped with a Jane Nelson jumper early in the second for a 31-7 lead. Eastern led 55-19 at halftime.

Nelson finished with 18 points on 7-of-9 shooting and hit four 3-pointers to lead EOU. Maren Herrud followed with 14 points, Beverly Slater scored 12 and three players — Maya Ah You-Dias, Emma Logan and Jillian Albright — each scored 10 points. Slater also had nine rebounds, and Madison Crews dished out eight assists.

On Saturday, the Mountaineers posted another easy win as they knocked down 20 3-pointers, and all 13 players who saw the floor scored.

Whitney Meier led six players in double figures for EOU with 18 points and was 5-for-6 from 3-point range. Ah You-Dias followed with 13 points, Albright scored 12, Crews and Brandy Smith had 11 and Herrud scored 10. In addition to Meier, eight other players connected from deep, with Ah You-Dias, Crews and Smith all adding three 3-pointers apiece. Slater and Kylie Smith both grabbed eight rebounds, and Herrud had 10 assists. As a team, the Mountaineers had 38 assists on 42 made field goals and shot 53 percent.

Eastern, which never trailed, took a 17-point lead after one quarter and built the margin to 61-29 by halftime. The Mountaineers led by as many as 66 points in the second half.

Eastern (20-2 overall, 14-0 CCC) travels to Kirkland, Washington, to play Northwest on Friday. Eastern is just three wins from securing at least a tie of the CCC title.

Robinson earns first-ever La Grande win at Reser's

Observer staff

The La Grande Tigers wrestling team scored 120.5 points to place seventh at the Reser's Tournament of Champions Friday and Saturday in Portland.

Parker Robinson led the Tigers by claiming the top spot at 160 pounds. The junior went a flawless 4-0, including two wins by fall and a technical fall. He needed just 1:14 to win the title match, earning a quick pin of Hillsboro's Nick Peterson. It was the first-ever title by an LHS wrestler at the event, according to La Grande Head Coach Klel Carson.

"We haven't had a team competitive enough (to

compete at Reser's)," Carson said, noting it's been about a decade since La Grande has gone to the invitation-only event. "The kids wrestled really well. It was really cool, and for Parker to win it was a great accomplishment for him."

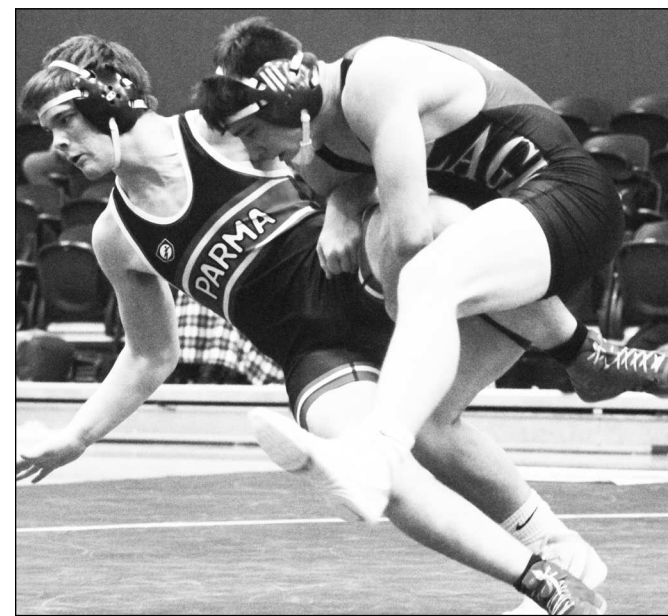
Christopher Woodworth (195) turned in a mark of 4-1 to place third. His lone loss came by fall in the semifinals to Sprague's Santos Cantu, but he rebounded for two wins by decision, including a 6-4 decision over Century's Loudyn Reese in the third-place match.

Ezra McIntosh (120) also reached the third-place match, but lost to West Linn's Kaden Goff by fall

to take fourth and finish 4-2. He had just edged out Crater's Tanner Ulrey in the consolation semifinals by a close 3-2 decision to reach the third-place bout.

Adding fifth-place finishes were Grayson Livingston (170) and Gabe Shukle (220). Livingston, who went 3-2, dropped two matches in a row, including a 9-7 decision to Mountain View's Colton Burkhardt in the consolation semifinals. He rebounded, though, for a 7-1 decision over Dallas' Patrick Holgate in the fifth-place match.

Shukle went 4-2, including winning three consolation matches in a row to get
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Observer file photo

Parker Robinson, right, shown earlier this month, was the 160-pound champion at the Reser's Tournament of Champions over the weekend in Portland.